UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/32
13 January 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 11 JANUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 11 January 1998 from Mr. Mohamed Said Al-Sahaf, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the allocation of the sum of $50 million from the funds provided for under the memorandum of agreement to finance the costs of the pilgrimage this year.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 11 January 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

As you know, the total embargo imposed on Iraq for more than seven years has had disastrous and inhuman consequences, which are incomprehensible.

In addition to the fact that the embargo has prevented Iraq from using its own resources and capacities to supply itself with food and medicine and meet its essential humanitarian needs, it has also deprived the Iraqi people of their right to carry out their religious obligations, in accordance with international humanitarian instruments, including the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular, article 18, which guarantees the freedom to manifest one's religion in observance.

Owing to the embargo, Iraqi Muslims have been deprived of the ability to carry out one of the principal obligations of the Muslim religion, namely, pilgrimage to the holy places of Islam because of the lack of the financial means needed to fulfil this obligation, which is cherished by Muslims throughout the world.

The obligation to perform the pilgrimage is a sacred duty for all Muslim men and women in accordance with the precepts of Islam. It is a question, therefore, of a humanitarian need just as, if not more than, the other needs.

In order to satisfy this basic need on the part of Iraqi Muslim citizens and in view of the fact that Security Council resolution 986 (1995) and the memorandum of agreement signed between Iraq and the United Nations Secretariat provides for the necessary means to meet the essential humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people by using part of their natural resources, the Iraqi Government, which desires to respond to this basic humanitarian need, requests the allocation of the sum of $50 million under the resources provided for in the memorandum of understanding to finance the pilgrimage of Iraqi Muslims to the holy places of Islam.

We are prepared to submit to you detailed proposals concerning the allocation of this sum to be drawn from Iraq's share of the funds coming from the export of its petroleum, in the hope that you will also be ready to hold consultations with us concerning the details of these proposals.

In the hope that you will respond favourably and speedily to this humanitarian request, I should like to convey to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohamed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq